



4.2 A POSITIVE COMMUNITY

OUR AIMS

Pittwater House is committed to providing a safe and caring environment, which allows students to learn and enhances feelings of self esteem, courtesy and respect for other members of the School community. Our school seeks to affirm each student’s worth and dignity. Bullying strikes at the basis of these values and prevents students reaching for excellence in every dimension of life. Students are entitled to receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. Bullying has far-reaching implications for everyone in the school community directly and indirectly. It can damage the atmosphere of a class and even the climate of the school. Bullying is the misuse of power, position and privilege. It is done to intimidate, coerce, engender fear, to control.

With the full support of the School, Pittwater House will seek to empower students to deal with bullying and harassment themselves in an appropriate manner. The word “bullying” is used to describe many different types of behaviour. Bullying/harassment may arise from feelings of inferiority, from a desire for popularity, from ignorance, from a desire to hurt or because someone seems physically, racially or intellectually different. Sometimes it is an individual who is doing the bullying and sometimes it is a group.

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WHAT ARE BULLYING AND HARASSMENT?

Bullying and harassment are unwelcome behaviours that are persistent, unwanted, hurtful, threatening or frightening. They are the exertion of power by another person or group over a person or group perceived to be less powerful.

Bullying/harassment may be:

Subtle (where the intentions of one party may not be clear or obvious)

- Staring/rolling the eyes/grimacing and making faces
- Unpleasant comments about another's body
- Invading someone's personal space
- Teasing
- Ridiculing or denigrating another person for their achievements
- Suggestive or hurtful comments or jokes

Explicit (where the intentions of one party are obvious)

- Notes, SMS, MSN, emails, social media, gestures made on a persistent basis
- Offensive comments or rumours
- Exclusion from a group
- Verbal abuse across year levels
- Threats or threatening comments
- Intimidation
- Throwing projectiles
- Displaying offensive material
- Overt physical behaviour such as pinching, grabbing, punching

Criminal (behaviours subject to legal action)

- Indecent exposure
- Sexual assault
- Attempted or actual rape
- Sending obscene letters, SMS, MSN, emails, social media
- Making obscene phone calls
- Physical violence
- Slander, libel or defamation

PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

STUDENTS SHOULD SUPPORT EACH OTHER IN REPORTING INSTANCES OF HARASSMENT OR BULLYING.

STUDENTS SHOULD:

- Try to ignore it; to react may encourage the behaviour
- NEVER obey a bully
- Report persistent, inappropriate behaviour, whether observed or experienced directly, immediately to any person in authority or a teacher with whom the student feels comfortable
- Remember that ‘dobbing’ is when you ‘tell on’ someone in authority for your own gratification. Reporting bullying or harassment is an important aspect of being a member of a community that takes responsibility for its members.

PARENTS CAN ASSIST IN THE PREVENTION OF BULLYING AND PROVIDE POSITIVE MODELS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION.

PARENTS CAN:

- Listen to their son or daughter if they say they are being bullied or someone is bullying others and agree on a course of action
- Notify the School if they feel the situation warrants intervention by the School staff
- Encourage their child to discuss incidents of bullying and reinforce the need to speak out about the behaviour
- Discourage their child from retaliating in kind to incidents of bullying or harassment
- Use appropriate channels to report incidents; NEVER approach other parents or children directly.

PITTWATER HOUSE STAFF WILL ACT AS ROLE MODELS OF CARING AND TOLERANT BEHAVIOUR.

THE SCHOOL WILL:

- Ensure that students are taught positive conflict resolution, tolerance and respect for others
- Be vigilant in monitoring the student body for signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying or harassment
- Use activities to reinforce Pittwater House’s aims with regard to a positive learning community
- Report incidents of bullying or harassment to staff designated to deal with it who will record and investigate the report
- Ensure that counselling is provided where needed for both victims and bullies. Students will receive help with strategies to enable them to handle the situation themselves where appropriate.

ACTIONS FOR STUDENTS TO TAKE

- Students are encouraged to report all incidents of bullying to a trusted teacher, Form Teacher, Counsellor or Head of School, even if the student is not directly involved.
- Students sometimes need support to deal with certain incidents that involve aggression and conflict resolution; therefore, they should speak with a member of the school's staff, in confidence.

ACTION THE SCHOOL WILL TAKE

If bullying/harassment continues the perpetrator may:

- Receive a warning
- Be required to attend a meeting with parents and the relevant Head of School
- Be required to discuss their behaviour with the victim/s and make amends
- Be suspended or expelled in extreme or persistent cases at the discretion of the Principal.

Pittwater House is committed to the establishment of a positive and inclusive School community where instances of bullying and harassment are the exception and students are equipped with life long skills to live harmoniously in a diverse society.

KEY CONTACTS

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